

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-07

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R 081117Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6124

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 0975

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK

SUBJECT: ALLEGED HARASSMENT OF AFGHAN TRAVELLERS BY PAK
OFFICIALS

1. SUMMARY. WAHEED ABDULLAH FEB 4 HANDED US A
PAK-AFGHAN HOT POTATO AND WE THINK WE COOLED IT.
PROBLEM WAS LARGE GROUP OF AFGHAN TRAVELLERS
CONGREGATED AT PAK-INDIAN BORDER AND UNABLE TO
TRANSIT PAKISTAN TO RETURN HOME BECAUSE OF NEW
PAK VISA REQUIREMENTS. WE USED OUR FRIENDLY
RELATIONS WITH PAK EMBASSY HERE, AND
COORDINATING WITH EMBASSY
ISLAMABAD, MANAGED AT LEAST TO GET PAKS TO LOWER
BARRIER FOR CURRENT BACKLOG OF TRAVELLERS. THIS
IS NOT HOWEVER KIND OF SITUATION IN WHICH WE
WILL WANT OFTEN TO BE INVOLVED. END SUMMARY.

2. AT URGENT PERSONAL REQUEST OF DEPUTY FOREIGN
MINISTER WAHEED ABDULLAH AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 4,
EMBASSY UNDERTOOK TO USE ITS GOOD OFFICES IN
RESOLVING A PAK/AFGHAN CONSULAR PROBLEM WHICH
SEEMED TO THREATEN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO
COUNTRIES WITH GETTING WORSE.

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3. PROBLEM REVOLVED AROUND AFGHAN TRAVELLERS WHO RECENTLY TRANSITED PAKISTAN TO VISIT INDIA AND WHO WISHED TO RETURN. UNTIL RECENTLY PAKISTAN HAS BEEN GENEROUS IN GRANTING MULTIPLE ENTRY VISAS FOR TRAVELLERS, BUT FOR "SECURITY REASONS" FOR PAST SEVERAL WEEKS HAD BEGUN TO ISSUE ONLY SINGLE ENTRY VISAS. TRAVELLERS WERE TOLD TO OBTAIN NEW VISA FOR TRANSITING PAKISTAN AT SWISS EMBASSY IN NEW DELHI. (WE WERE TOLD IN CONFIDENCE BY PAK CHARGE THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD BECOME ALARMED AT AFGHAN TRAVELLERS WHO ALLEGEDLY ENGAGED IN INTELLIGENCE AND SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES SUCH AS SUPPLYING ARMS FOR PAKISTANI DISSIDENTS.)

4. SWISS EMBASSY WAS, WE GATHER, SIMPLY UNABLE TO COPE WITH ITS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES, WITH THE RESULT THAT PERHAPS AS MANY AS SEVERAL HUNDRED AFGHAN TRAVELLERS HAD CONGREGATED AT THE PAK/ INDIAN BORDER POST OF WAGAH, WHERE THEY WERE UNABLE TO PROCEED.

5. ON AFTERNOON OF WAHEED ABDULLAH'S TELEPHONE CALL (FEBRUARY 4), WE CALLED ON GOOD OFFICES OF PAKISTANI EMBASSY HERE AND, KEEPING EMBASSY ISLAMABAD INFORMED, BELIEVE WE WERE ABLE TO FOCUS PAK ATTENTION ON RESOLVING THIS IRRITATING CONSULAR PROBLEM -- AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT.

6. EMBASSY HAS NO INTENTION OF GETTING CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF A SPAT LIKE THIS, WHICH WE REGARD (AND TOLD AFGHANS HERE) WAS PERFECT EXAMPLE OF DISPUTE WHICH OUGHT TO BE RESOLVED DIRECTLY BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN. WE DID NOT, HOWEVER, WANT TO REJECT PERSONAL REQUEST OF THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, AND WE BELIEVE OUR ROLE WAS USEFUL, IN THE EMERGENCY SITUATION DESCRIBED TO US, IN HELPING THE PAKISTANIS AND AFGHANS STAVE OFF WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN A POINTLESS AND UNNECESSARY CONFRONTATION. IT APPEARED ALSO FROM LOCAL PAK EMBASSY COMMENTS THAT AFGHANS HAD BEEN REASONABLY RESOLUTE AND ORDERLY IN PUTTING PROBLEM FIRST AT DOOR OF PAK

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EMBASSY HERE.

6. PAK "HARASSMENT" COULD PERHAPS BE RELATED TO BAD TREATMENT AFGHANS HAVE METED OUT TO PAKISTANI TRAVELLERS FOR MORE THAN PAST YEAR, INCLUDING FOR EXAMPLE THEIR ALLEGED RESTRICTION FROM MOST KABUL HOTELS. THOUGH WE ARE INCLINED TO TAKE PAK EMBASSY'S ACCOUNT OF RAKENT EVENTS LITERALLY

(SECURITY PROBLEMS, SWISS EMBASSY, ETC), IT IS
WORTH RECALLING THAT PAK-AFGHAN CONSULAR AGENDA
HAS MORE THAN ONE CONTENTIOUS ITEM.
ELIOT

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